

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:HHJANIN:SEH

APPROVED BY P:MR.SISCO

AF/E:WBCOOTE

AF:EWMULCAHY

S/S: JPMOFFAT

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R 071727Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T STATE 030930

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS:PFOR, ZA, AO, RH

SUBJECT:CHONA VISIT: ANGOLA

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

1) UNDERSECRETARY SISCO HOSTED LUNCH FOR MARK CHONA,
POLITICAL ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT KAUNDA, ON FEBRUARY 5.
FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT POINTS WERE COVERED:

2) CONVERSATION DEALT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH ANGOLA.
CHONA DESCRIBED ZAMBIA AS "FRIGHTENED" BY SOVIET ROLE IN
ANGOLA. HE NOTED THAT WHILE USSR WAS ONLY MAJOR POWER
PREPARED TO PROVIDE "INSTRUMENTS", I.E. MILITARY AND
FINANCIALSUPPORT, TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, SOVIET INVOLVE-
MENT IN ANGOLA HAD FAR EXCEEDED THE AIMS OF LIBERATING T'E
COUNTRY FROM PORTUGUESE RULE AND HAD BECOME "TACTICAL".
SISCO QUESTIONED WHETHER SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT

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LIBERATION MOVEMENTS REFLECTED GENUINE SOVIET INTEREST IN

AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE, OR WHETHER IT WAS CLOAKING A NEW FORM OF IMPERIALISM. SISCO COMMENTED THAT SINCE WW II, NO ONE CAN POINT TO THE US AS WISHING TO SUBSTITUTE ITSELF FOR COLONIAL POWERS IN AFRICA. THE US, HE SAID, HAS NO DESIGNS ON AFRICA -- IN CONTRAST TO SOVIET COLONIALISM.

3) CHONA SAID THESE POINTS WELL COMPREHENDED BY KAUNDA. NEVERTHELESS, ZAMBIA SHARES GENERAL IMPRESSION OF AFRICA, THAT ONLY USSR CAN BE COUNTED ON TO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT AID TO LIBERATION STRUGGLES. NEVERTHELESS US HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL TO ZAMBIA IN PEACEFUL WAYS. HE CITED US AIRLIFT ASSISTANCE TO ZAMBIA IN 1960'S AS EXAMPLE OF MUCH-NEEDED AND MUCH-APPRECIATED HELP. KAUNDA IS AWARE OF SOVIET DESIGNS AND HAS DESCRIBED THE USSR AS COMING IN A "TROJAN HORSE DISGUISE". YET WHEN THE ISSUE OF LIBERATION STRUGGLES MUST BE DECIDED ON THE BATTLEFIELD, AFRICANS KNOW "US MUST BE COUNTED OUT".

4) IN RESPONSE TO A COMMENT BY CHONA THAT USSR HAD "OVERCOMMITTED" ITSELF TO MPLA AT EARLY POINT, SISCO ASKED WHY THIS WAS SO. CHONA SAID THE ANSWER INVOLVED BOTH THE HISTORY OF LIBERATION STRUGGLES IN AFRICA AND THE PERSONALITIES OF MPLA LEADERS. SOVIETS HAD HISTORICALLY SUPPORTED MPLA AND GIVEN IT ARMS; MANY MPLA AND OTHER LIBERATION GROUP CADRES HAD BEEN TRAINED IN USSR; AND USSR WAS READY AND ABLE TO HELP.

5) CHONA ALSO NOTED THAT US DECISION TO LET CIA CONDUCT COVERT OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA HAD HAD BAD PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPACT IN AFRICA, WHERE THERE IS MUCH SUSPICION OF CIA DUE IN LARGE PART TO REVELATIONS IN US MEDIA. WHILE KGB WAS A FACT OF LIFE TOO, HE OBSERVED, IT GOT MUCH LESS EXPOSURE IN MEDIA AND WAS THUS NOT AS VISIBLE A TARGET AS CIA.

6) RE RECOGNITION OF MPLA BY AFRICAN STATES, CHONA SAID THAT THIS WAS CHIEFLY A REACTION TO SOUTH AFRICA'S INVOLVEMENT. SISCO OBSERVED THAT USG'S PROBLEMS WERE NOT UNRELATED TO ZAMBIA'S CONCERNING ANGOLAN ISSUE. THE VOICES OF THOSE OPPOSING USSR WERE NOT BEING HEARD,

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EITHER IN AFRICA OR IN US. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE 22 ANTI-MPLA STATES AT THE OAU HAD MADE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN IN THE US, THE IMPACT WOULD HAVE BEEN DECISIVE. OUR POSITION THAT WE WANT TO SEE THE THREE ANGOLAN FACTIONS RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS PEACEFULLY HAS FALLEN ON EMPTY EARS, IN PART BECAUSE AFRICANS DID NOT PITCH IN AND ASK US FOR HELP IN RESISTING SOVIET MOVES.

7) ZAMBIAN AMBASSADOR MWALE COMMENTED THAT THE US HAD NOT REALLY CRITICIZED SOUTH AFRICA'S INVOLVEMENT, NOR TOLD SAG TO GET OUT OF ANGOLA. SISCO POINTED OUT WE HAD CALLED FOR THE END OF ALL OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, INCLUDING SOUTH AFRICA, BUT THAT MILITARY BALANCE WOULD

HAVE COLLAPSED HAD SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES BEEN WITHDRAWN. CHONA OBSERVED THAT AT ADDIS SUMMIT, 22 OAU MEMBERS HAD APPROVED US RIGHT TO RESPOND TO USSR ACTIONS; ONLY THE USSR WAS CONDEMNED, WHICH WAS A "FIRST" AT OAU.

8) CONCERNING CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES, SISCO STATED THAT THERE WAS SUPPORT ON THE HILL FOR PROPOSITION THAT ANGOLAN PROBLEM NOT BE PERMITTED TO SPREAD IN THE HEART OF AFRICA. THERE IS BROAD AND DEEP CONCERN FOR BOTH ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE. IF WE GO FORWARD TO HELP OUR FRIENDS IN AFRICA -- TO INSULATE THEM FROM THE SPREAD OF ANGOLA -- THIS WILL BE UNDERSTOOD IN CONGRESS.

9) CHONA NOTED THAT IN ORDER TO JOIN THE OAU AS THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA, THE MPLA NEEDED A CLEAR-CUT MILITARY VICTORY TO PRESENT AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI. ONCE ANGOLA WAS ADMITTED TO OAU, HE WARNED, IT WOULD BE IRREVELANT WHICH DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN FORCES WERE IN THE COUNTRY, SINCE AFRICANS WOULD CONSIDER THIS PRIMARILY AN INTERNAL MATTER.

10) IN HIS TOAST, SISCO SAID HE HOPED CHONA WOULD LEAVE WITH KNOWLEDGE THAT US WANTS TO ACT IN CONCERT WITH ZAMBIA; THAT WE ARE DETERMINED TO ACT IN BEST INTERESTS OF AFRICA; AND THAT AFRICA HAS NO REASON TO FEAR US SINCE WE WISH ONLY TO HELP AFRICA FIND ITS OWN WAY.

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11) RESPONDING TO TOAST, CHONA SAID THAT KAUNDA HAS ALWAYS CONSIDERED US TO BE ON SIDE OF JUSTICE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HOWEVER, US AND ZAMBIA HAD NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL IN THE PAST, SINCE OPPOSING FORCES HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING A DEGREE OF LEGITIMACY. THE QUESTION WAS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? CREDIBLE ACTION IS NECESSARY, IN A MATTER OF WEEKS, NOT MONTHS. ZAMBIA CONSIDERS ACTION BY THE US IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TO BE BOTH URGENT AND NECESSARY, HE CONCLUDED. SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE030930
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HHJANIN:SEH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760048-0145
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760270/aaaacjzd.tel
Line Count: 163
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 FEB 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HONA VISIT: ANGOLA CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY
TAGS: PFOR, ZA, AO, RH, UR, (CHONA, MARK)
To: LUSAKA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006